



# Pistol Range Upgrade Right On Target

Story by Grant Sattler

U.S. Army Europe soldiers are knocking down silhouettes left and right on their way to better marksmanship with the 9mm Beretta pistol following the Sept. 20 opening of USAREUR's newest Combat Pistol Qualification Course range.

"This is the first time since the mid-'80s there has been a Military Construction-Army (MCA) project in a training area," said Chief of Training Support Activity, Europe Thomas Scarbath. "It's a great facility for our soldiers. ... Small arms qualification is more important than ever for soldiers across the Army."

The two-lane, 31-meter facility on the Messel Range near Darmstadt represents a significant upgrade from the authorized alternate pistol qualification available before, said Dan Wemhoff, Regional Range and Local Training Area Manager for the Mannheim Region, 7<sup>th</sup> Army Training Command.

"Now, instead of firing at a 25-meter range for qualification, shooters can now qualify in accordance with Army standards," he said. "It's quality qualification."

Wemhoff said that within the Mannheim Region alone there are more than 4,000 soldiers who must shoot to qualify on the pistol, but added that the newest CPQC range is also available for all USAREUR units. "If they schedule, they can come on down and use it," he said.

Among first to shoot on the range were local Military Police. Pvt. Jason Gomez, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 92<sup>nd</sup> MP Company, said the new range is a real benefit for their biannual qualifications. "We need this more than anybody," he said.

The nine-month construction on the \$546,000

range started Sept. 17, 2001, Wemhoff said.

"The physical effort that has been put into the facility is awesome, considering the condition of the range that was here before," he said.

Work was accomplished by German firm SKE & Klee & Ehrenfels Bau KG and subcontractor ROBA

Baubiologische Beratung GmbH under supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District.

Raymond Perea, range manager for Messel Range and other facilities in Aschaffenburg and Babenhausen, said the contractor did an excellent job.

Europe District's Project Engineer David Muellerleile said, "Special pains taken in determining the final design requirements for the range have made it a template for future combat pistol qualification course ranges."

Scarbath said the range is the first of several Training Support Activity, Europe projects they will have with the Corps of Engineers. "In the '04 to '09 timeframe, there are roughly \$135 million worth of MCA projects USAREUR-wide for USAREUR training areas to include Grafenwöhr," he said. "Not long after soldiers start to fire on this, we'll start construction of the Army Record Fire Range behind us that will be the first of three regional range complexes, and the first Army Record Fire Range outside of Grafenwöhr."

Key to project success were Europe District Project Manager Gary Sebastian, 233<sup>rd</sup> Safety Manager Peter Grau, and Helmut Schwindl from the 100<sup>th</sup> Area Support Group Directorate of Public Works, who provided key design criteria to Europe District before contract award and worked closely with the project engineer and contractor throughout construction, Muellerleile said.